Community-focused Product Safety & Quality Control Systems

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Different types of community-focused organic guarantee systems

- Participatory Guaranty System (PGS)
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Internal Control System (ICS)

Participatory Guaranty System Features

1. **Norms conceived by the stakeholders through** a democratic and participatory in accordance with the commonly understood sense of what constitutes an organic product.

2. **Grassroots Organization**: The Participatory Certification should be perceived as a result of a social dynamic, based on an active organization of all stakeholders.

3. **Is appropriate to smallholder agriculture,** because the participatory nature and horizontal structure of the programs allows for more appropriate and less costly mechanisms of certification

4. **Principles and values** that enhance the livelihoods and well being of farming families and promote organic agriculture

5. **Documented management systems and procedures** – there is minimal paperwork required of farmers but there are ways in which they are expected to demonstrate their organic commitment and integrity.

PGS Features

6. **Mechanisms to verify farmer's compliance** to the established norms, which is able to stimulate participation, organization, and which allow a learning process for all the stakeholders

7. **Mechanisms for supporting farmers** to produce organic products and be certified as organic farmers, to include field advisors, newsletters, farm visits, web sites etc.

8. Should have a bottom-line document, for example a **farmer's pledge** stating his/her agreement with the established norms

9. **Seals or labels** providing evidence of organic status

10. **Clear and previously defined consequences for farmers** not complying with standards, actions recorded in a data base or made public in some way

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

- CSA generally is the practice of focusing on the production of high quality foods using organic or biodynamic farming methods
- This kind of farming operates with a much greater-than-usual degree of involvement of consumers and other stakeholders — resulting in a stronger than usual consumer-producer relationship
- Core design includes developing a cohesive consumer group that is willing to fund a whole season's budget in order to get quality foods; the system has many variations on how the farm budget is supported by the consumers and how the producers then deliver the foods
- By CSA theory, the more a farm embraces whole-farm, whole-budget support, the more it can focus on quality and reduce the risk of food waste or financial loss

Internal Control System

(ICS)

Definition of Internal Control System

- A *documented quality assurance system* that allows the external certification body to delegate the annual inspection of individual group members to an identified body/unit within the certified operator

- The main task of the certifying body is to evaluate the proper functioning of the ICS

Basic types of Smallholder Projects

Cooperative or farmers Association operates the ICS

A processor, exporter, or an NGO operates the ICS (contract production)

ICS Manual and Description of Activities

- The ICS must have documented and standardized policies, procedures and forms
- ICS operator has to present a brief overview of its organization and registered farms, as well as on buying and handling procedures

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

- Risks that may jeopardize organic quality must be known and taken into account in all internal procedures
- Therefore the ICS must do an initial risk assessment; all necessary measures must be taken by the ICS to minimize risks
- The external inspector has to do an overall risk assessment to determine the total re-inspection rate and to be aware of critical control points

Internal Organic Standard

- Outlines the farm production requirements in a way that can be understood by the farmers and the ICS staff

- Takes account of applicable standards as far as these requirements are important and relevant for the operation

Internal Control and Approval Procedures

- Regulation of new farmers: basic farm data, contract and map
- Internal inspection: effective inspections, detailed internal inspection checklist
- Yield Estimates
- Internal Approval Sanction procedure: sanctions must be appropriate and effective
- ICS documentation for each farmer and summarizing farmers list

Organization and ICS Personnel

- One person is responsible for the overall ICS implementation but may delegate responsibilities so that for each ICS procedure or task one person is in charge
- All personnel must be qualified and aware of their responsibilities
- Conflicts of interest must be avoided

Training

- Farmers have to be trained in organic farming methods and the rules for organic farming

- ICS personnel must be continuously trained in order to be aware of organic farming practices, certification requirements and important internal procedures

Group Certification Process
The 3 Pillars of Organic Certification

Principles of Smallholder Group Certification

- A central body within the farmers group ensures the compliance of all smallholder with an organic standard
- The group has a formal internal control system (ICS)
- One certification for the group (not for individual farmers)

- Source: IFOAM Training Manual on ICS

Group Certification Process

Maraming salamat po!

Thank you!